## AN AIR-CASTLE.

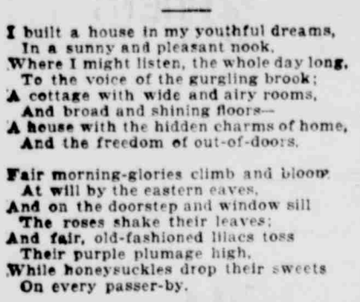
I built a house in my youthful dreams,
In a sunny and pleasant nook,
Where I might listen, the whole day long,
To the voice of the gurgling brook;
A cottage with wide and airy rooms,
And broad and shining floors—
A house with the hidden charms of home,
And the freedom of out-of-doors.

Fair morning-glories climb and bloom
At will by the eastern eaves,
And on the doorstep and window sill
The roses shake their leaves;
And fair, old-fashioned lilacs toss
Their purple plumage high,
While honeysuckles drop their sweets
On every passer-by.

Down at the end of a pleasant path
Is a group of evergreen trees—
Pine and hemlock, and spruce and fir,
With their spicy fragrances;
And, sweetest picture of calm content
That mortal ever saw,
Under a low-boughed apple tree
Is a bee-hive made of straw.

I have pictured it all a hundred times—
I shall do it a hundred more—
But I never shall own the pleasant home
With the roses over the door.
Never a dream of mine came true;
(It is Fate's unbending law).
I never shall see the apple tree
Nor the bee-hive made of straw.

But yet, in the airy realm of dreams—
Where all my riches be—
I enter in to the heritage
Which is else denied to me;
I have but to close my eyes to find
My Eden without a flaw—
The home, the garden, the apple tree,
And the bee-hive made of straw.
—Elizabeth Akers Allen, in Elliott's Magazine.






### CHAPTER VII.

Billy Gray was indeed in close arrest and the grim prophecy was fulfilled—Col. Canker was proving "anything but a guardian angel to him." The whole regiment, officers and men, barring only the commander, was practically in mourning with sorrow for him and chagrin over its own discomfiture. Not only one important prisoner was gone, but two; not only two, but four. No man in authority was able to say just when or how it happened, for it was Canker's own order that the prisoners should not be paraded when the guard fell in at night. They were here at tattoo and at taps all right. The officer of the guard, said several soldiers, had quite a long talk with one of the prisoners—young Morton—just after tattoo, at which time the entire guard had been inspected by the commanding officer. But at reveille four most important prisoners were gone, and such was Canker's wrath that not only was Gray in arrest, but the sergeant of the guard also, while the three luckless men who were successively posted as sentries during the night at the back of the wooden shell that served as a guardhouse—were now in close confinement in the place of the escaped quartette.

Yet those three were men who had hitherto been above suspicion, and there were few soldiers in the regiment who would accept the theory that any one of the three had connived at the escape. As for the sergeant — he had served four enlistments in the —teenth, and without a flaw in his record beyond an occasional aberration in the now distant past, due to the potency of the poteen distilled by certain Hibernian experts not far from an old-time plains fort, where the regiment had rested on its march 'cross continent. As for the officers—but who would suppose an officer guilty of anything of the kind—a flagrant military crime? And yet—men got to asking each other if it were so that Bugler Curran had carried a note from the prisoner, Morton, to Mr. Gray about 2:30 that afternoon? And what was this about Gray's having urged Brooke to swap tours with him an hour later, and what was that story the headquarters clerks were telling about Mr. Gray's coming to the adjutant and begging to be allowed to "march on" that evening instead of Brooke? It wasn't long before these rumors, somehow, got to Canker's ears, and Canker seemed to grow as big again; he fairly swelled with indignation at thought of such turpitude on part of an officer. Then he sent for Gray—it was the afternoon following the sailing of the ships with the big brigade—and with pain and bewilderment and indignation in his brave blue eyes the youngster came and stood before his stern superior. Gordon, who sent the message, and who had heard Canker's denunciatory remarks, had found time to scribble a word or two: "Admit nothing; say nothing; do nothing but hold your tongue and temper. If C. insists on answers say you decline except in presence of your legal adviser." So there was a scene in the commander's tent that afternoon. The morning had not been without its joys. Along about ten o'clock as Gray sat writing to his father in his little canvas home, he heard a voice that sent the blood leaping through his veins and filled his eyes with light. Springing from his campstool and capsizing it as he did so, he poked his curly head from the entrance of the tent — and there she was — only a dozen feet away — Maj. Lane in courteous attendance, Mr. Prime sadly following, and Miss Prime quite content with the devotions of Capt. Schuyler. Only a dozen feet away and coming straight to him, with frank smiles and sympathy in her kind and winsome face—with hand outstretched the moment she caught sight of him. "We wanted to come when we heard of it yesterday, Mr. Gray," said Amy Lawrence, "but it was dark when we got back from secing the fleet off, and uncle was too tired in the evening. Indeed, we are all very, very sorry!" And poor Billy never heard or cared what the others said, so absorbed was he in drinking in her gentle words and gazing into her soft, dark eyes. No wonder he found it difficult to release her hand. That brief visit, filled with sweetness and sunshine, ought to have been a blessing to him all day long, but Canker caught sight of the damsels as they walked away on the arms of the attendant cavaliers—Miss Lawrence more than once smiling back at the incarcerated Billy—and Canker demanded to be informed who they were and where they had been, and Gordon answered they were Miss Lawrence, of Santa Anita, and Miss Prime, of New York—and he "reckoned" they must have been in to condole with Mr. Gray—whereat Canker snarled that people ought to know better than to visit officers in arrest—it was tantamount to disrespect to the commander. It was marvelous how many things in Canker's eyes were disrespectful.

So he heard these stories with eager ears and sent for Gray, and thought to bully him into an admission or confession, but Gordon's words had "stiffened" the little fellow to the extent of braving Canker's anger and telling him he had said all he proposed to say when the colonel called him up the previous day. The result of that was his being placed in close arrest and informed that he should be tried by general court-martial at once. So he had taken counsel, as was his right, and "counsel" forbade his committing himself in any way.

"Then you refuse to divulge the contents of that note and to say why you were so eager to go on guard out of your turn?" said Canker, oracularly. "That in itself is sufficient to convince any fair-minded court of your guilt, sir." Whereat Gordon winked at Billy and put his tongue in his cheek—and Billy stood mute until ordered, with much asperity, to go back to his tent.

But there were other things that might well go toward convincing a court of the guilt of Lieut. Gray, and poor Billy contemplated them with sinking heart. Taking prompt advantage of his position as officer of the guard, he had caused the young prisoner to be brought outside the guardhouse, and as a heavy, dripping fog had come on the wings of the night wind, sailing in from the sea, he had led the way to the sheltered side, which happened to be the darkest one, of the rude little building, and had there bidden him tell his story. But Morton glanced uneasily at a sentry who followed close and was hovering suspiciously about. "I cannot talk about—the affair—with that fellow spying," he said, with an eager plea in his tone and a sign of the hand that Gray well knew and quickly recognized. "Keep around in front. I'll be responsible for this prisoner," were his orders, and, almost reluctantly, the man left. He was a veteran soldier, and his manner impressed the lieutenant with a vague sense of trouble. Twice the sentry glanced back and hesitated, as though something were on his mind that he must tell, but finally he disappeared and kept out of the way during the brief interview that immediately followed. The prisoner eagerly, excitedly began his explanation—swiftly banishing any lingering doubts Gray might have entertained as to his innocence. But he had come from a stove-heated guard room into the cold sea wind of the Pacific—into the floating wisps of vapor that sent chill to the marrow. He was far too lightly clad for that climate, and presently he began to shiver.

"You are cold," said Gray, pityingly. "Have you no overcoat?"

"It's at my tent—I never expected to spend this night here. I've been before the summary court, fined for absence, and thought that would end it, but instead of that I'm a prisoner and the man who should be here is stalking about camp, planning more robberies. Yet I'd rather associate with the very worst of deserters or dead beats inside there," and the dark eyes glanced almost in horror—the slender figure shook with unmingled repulsion and chill—"than with that smooth-tongued sneak and liar. There's no crime too mean for him to commit, Mr. Gray, and the men are beginning to know it, though the colonel won't. For God's sake get me out of this before morning—" And again the violent tremor shok the lad from head to foot.

"Here—get inside!" said Gray, impulsively. "I'll see the adjutant at once and return to you in a few minutes. If you have to remain until the matter can be investigated by the general it might be—"

"It would be—" vehemently interrupted Morton, then breaking off short as though at loss for descriptiveness of sufficient strength. He seemed to swell with passion as he clinched his fists and fairly stood upon his toes an instant, his strong white teeth grinding together. "It would be—simply hell!" he burst in again, hoarse and quivering: "It would ruin everything! Can't the general give the order to-night?" he asked with intense eagerness, while the young officer, taking him by the arm, had led him again to the light of the guardhouse lamps at the front. The sergeant and a group of soldiers straightened up and faced them, listening curiously.

"It may be even impossible to see the general," answered Gray, doubtfully. "Take Morton into the guardroom till I get back, sergeant, and let him warm himself thoroughly. Don't put him with the prisoners till I return," and so saying he hastened away. Gordon, his friend and adviser, had left camp and gone visiting over in the other division. The lights at general headquarters were turned low. Even now, after having heard proofs of the innocence of the accused soldier, Gray knew that it was useless to appeal to the colonel. He could not understand, however, the feverish—almost insane impatience of the lad for immediate release. Another day ought not to make so great a difference. What could be the reason—if it were not that, though innocent of the robbery of the storehouse, or of complicity in the sale of stolen goods, some other crime lay at his door which the morrow might disclose? All the loyalty of a Delta Sig was stretched to the snapping point as Gray paused irresolute in front of the adjutant's tent, his quest there unsuccessful. The sergeant major and a sorely badgered clerk were working late over some regimental papers—things that Morton wrote out easily and accurately.

"I suppose, sir, it's no use asking to have the prisoner sent up here under guard," said that jewel of a non-commissioned officer. "Yet the colonel will be savage if these papers ain't ready. It will take us all night as things are going."

Gray shook his curly head. "Go ask, if you like, but—Morton's in no shape to help you—"

"Has he been drinking, sir?" said the sergeant major, in surprise. "I never knew him—"

"Oh, it isn't that," said Gray, hastily, "only he's—he's got—other matters on his mind! Bring me his overcoat. He said it was in his tent," and the young officer jerked his head at the patch of little "A" tents lined up in the rear of those of the officers'.

"Get Morton's overcoat and take it to him at the guardhouse," snapped the staff sergeant to the clerk. "Be spry now, and no stopping on the way back," he added, well aware how much in need his assistant stood of creature comfort of some surreptitious and forbidden kind. The man was back in a moment, the coat rolled on his arm.

"I'll take it," said Gray, simply. "You needn't come."

"Go on with it!" ordered the sergeant as the soldier hesitated. "D'ye the service has gone to the devil and officers are runnin' errands for enlisted men? An' get back inside two minutes, too," he added, with portent in his tone. The subaltern of hardly two months' service felt the implied rebuke of the soldier of over 20 years' and meekly accepted the amendment, but—a thought occurred to him: He had promised Morton paper, envelopes and stamps and the day's newspapers—the lad seemed strangely eager to get all the latter, and vaguely Billy remembered having heard that Canker considered giving papers to prisoners as equivalent to aid and comfort to the enemy.

"Take it by way of my tent," said he as they started, and, once there it took

"The morning will be too late."

time to find things. "Go back to the sergeant major and tell him I sent you," said Gray, after another search. "He needs you on those papers."

And when the officer of the guard returned to the guardhouse and went in to the prisoner, the sergeant saw—and others saw—that, rolled in the soldier's overcoat he carried on his arm, was a bundle done up in newspaper. Moreover, a scrap of conversation was overheard.

"There's no one at the general's," said the officer. "I see no way of—fixing it before morning."

"My God, lieutenant! There—must be some way out of it! The morning will be too late."

"Then I'll do what I can for you to-night," said Mr. Gray, as he turned and hurriedly left the guardroom—a dozen men standing stiffly about the walls and doorway and staring with impassive faces straight to the front. Again, the young officer had left the post of the guard and gone up into camp, while far and near through the dim, fog-swept aisles of a score of camps the bugles and trumpets were wailing the signal for "lights out," and shadowy forms, with coat collars turned up about the ears or capes muffled around the neck, scurried about the company streets ordering laughter and talk to cease. A covered carriage was standing at the curb outside the officers' gate—and the sentry there posted remembered that the officer of the guard came hurrying out and asked the driver if he was engaged. "I'm waiting for the major," was the answer.

"Well, where can one order a carriage to-night without going clear to town?" inquired Gray. "I want—one; that is—I wish to order one at once."

And the driver, who knew very well there were several places where carriages could be had, preferred loyalty to his own particular stable away in town, and so declared there was none.

"You can telephone there, if you wish, sir," he added.

"And wait till morning for it to get here? No! I'll get it—somehow."

And that he did get it somehow was current rumor on the following day, for the sentries on the guardhouse side of camp swore that a closed carriage drove down from McAllister street for all the world as though it had just come out of the park and rolled on past the back of the guardhouse, the driver loudly whistling "Killarney," so that it could be heard above the crunching of the wheels through the rough, loose rock that covered the road, and that carriage drew up not a hundred yards away, while the lieutenant was out visiting sentries and presently they saw him coming back along the walk, stopping to question each sentry as to his orders. Then he returned and inquired if all was quiet among the prisoners, and then went and put out his light in the tent reserved for the officer of the guard, and once more left his post, briefly informing the sergeant of the guard he was going to the officer of the day. Then it was ascertained that he had visited half a dozen places in search of that veteran captain and appeared much disturbed because he could not find him. In half an hour he was back, asking excitedly of the sentry in rear of the guardhouse if a carriage had come that way. It had, said the sentry, and was waiting down the street. Gray hurried in the direction indicated, was gone perhaps three minutes and returned, saying that the sentry must be mistaken, that no carriage was there. But the sentry reiterated his statement that it had been there and had been waiting for some time, and must have disappeared while he was temporarily around at the opposite side of the building. This was about 11 p. m.

Then when Gray appeared at reveille Morton had disappeared.

"It's not the sergeant let them fellers out," said the regimental oracles "This is no ten-dollar subscription business." And so until late in the afternoon the question that agitated the entire range of regimental camps was: "How did those fellows break away from the prison of the —teenth?" Then came a clew, and then—discovery.

By order of Lieut. Col. Canker a board of officers had been convened to investigate the matter, and after questioning everybody whom "Squeers" had already badgered with his assertions, threats and queries, they went to the guardhouse and began a thorough inspection of the premises. The wooden building stood in the midst of a waste of sand blown in from the shore line by the strong sea wind. It was perched on something like a dozen stout posts driven into the soft soil and then the space between the floor level and the sand was heavily and stoutly boarded in—thick planks being used. Between the floor and the sand was a space of about 18 inches vertical, and a dozen men could have sprawled therein—lying at full length—but to escape would have required the connivance of one or more of the sentries surrounding the building and the ripping off of one or more of the planks. In his keen anxiety Canker accompanied the board on its tour of investigation—a thing the board did not at all like—and presently, as was his wont, began running things his own way. It had been found useless to question the soldiers of the guard. Not a man could be found to admit he knew the faintest thing about the escape. As for the prisoners, most of them reckless, devil-may-care rascals, they grinned or leered suggestively, but had nothing to tell.

"We'll have this boarding ripped off," said Canker, decisively, "and see what they've got secreted under there. I shouldn't be surprised to find a whisky still in full blast, or a complete gambling outfit—dash, dash 'em to dash and dashnation! Send for a carpenter, sergeant."

[To Be Continued.]

### An Alien from Arkansas.

"When I was on the bench," relates Judge J. J. DuBose, "we were once making up a special jury for a murder trial. The lawyers were examining the venire, and I wasn't paying much attention to what was going on, till one of the lawyers attracted my attention by saying:

"'Your honor, this man is incompetent for jury service. He's a foreigner.'

"I looked at the man under examination and didn't think he looked like a foreigner. He looked, anyway, like he was acclimated. So I asked him:

"'Have you ever been naturalized?'

"'No, sir,' he answered.

"'And you say you're a foreigner and not naturalized. What country are you a native of?'

"'Arkansas.'

"Well, everybody in the courtroom laughed. I told the man he could go. He wasn't much of a foreigner, but too much to sit on a jury in my court."—Memphis Scimitar.

### They Would Stay.

A new military prison chaplain was recently appointed in a certain town in Scotland, and, entering one of the cells on his first round of inspection, he, with much pomposity, thus addressed the prisoner who occupied it: "Well, sir, do you know who I am?" "No, nor I dinna care," was the nonchalant reply. "Well, I'm your new chaplain." "Oh ye are; well, I hae heard o' ye before." "And what did you hear?" returned the chaplain, his curiosity getting the better of his dignity. "Well, I heard that the last twa kirks ye were in ye preached them baith empty, but I'll be hanged if ye find it such an easy matter to do the same wi' this one."—San Francisco Examiner.

### Household Frugality.

Mrs. Younghusband—Do you notice any difference in the milk, dear?

Mr. Younghusband—I should say so; this is a much better quality than we have been getting lately.

Mrs. Younghusband—Indeed it is. I got it of a new man, who said he would guarantee it to be perfectly pure, so I got enough to last for a couple of weeks —Chicago Daily News.

### Not a Showman.

Bobby—Are you in the show business, Mr. Wedder?

Mr. Wedder (with eight children)—Why, no, Bobby; what made you think so?

Bobby—Oh, I heard papa tell Kate that if she married you she'd have a whole menagerie to look after.—Brooklyn Life.

## MAY BE STORY OF THE MAINE.

### Spanish Cipher Cablegram Found by an American Soldier in Manila.

"Blue tape" is the expression which might properly be applied to Spanish official circumlocution. C. Leland, a young man from Bismarck, N. D., came to Chicago a few days ago to join a regiment which he had heard was being recruited there for service in the Boer army. He carried a little bundle of blue paper which might reveal the secret of the Maine explosion in Havana harbor if the writing on it could be read. It purports to be a dispatch in cipher from a Spanish official in Havana to Gov. Gen. Augueti at Manila. It is dated February 18, 1898, and written in Spanish cipher code on a narrow ribbon of light blue paper, about 100 feet long. The paper is wound in a circular coil and makes a bunch six inches in diameter. There is nothing on the paper to establish its genuineness, says the Inter Ocean.

Young Leland got it from Charles Jackson, a soldier in a South Dakota regiment that served in the Philippines. When the American army took possession at Manila this paper, with a great many other official documents, it is said, was found in a safe in the governor general's office. Gen. Otis ordered them all burned, but Jackson rescued the cipher cablegram from the pile as a souvenir. He was killed soon afterward, but previous to that had mailed the paper to Leland.

## A SUCCESSFUL FARMER.

Within three miles of the town going eastward is the farm of Mr. W. Creamer, one of the municipality's largest and most prosperous mixed farmers. Mr. Creamer came to this country in 1880 and settled on a portion of the land which comprises his present enormous farm of 1,280 acres. In common with many others of a similar period he experienced all the hardships and difficulties common to the absence of railway and market facilities. In no wise daunted, by energy, industry and indomitable will he has been able to surmount all obstacles and has achieved an unparalleled success, and is known throughout the district as one of its preeminent farmers. His operations extend over 1,280 acres, two sections (the thought alone of so much land makes the eastern farmer dizzy); 800 acres of this is broken and the remainder is excellent pasture land and wood. This harvest he took off a crop of 500 acres of wheat and 200 of other grains. Four hundred acres are plowed and ready for wheat next spring. Mr. Creamer is, as has been stated, a mixed farmer of no mean proportions, having at the present time 40 horses, 60 head of cattle and 50 pigs. The most modern farm buildings are found on his premises, the main building being a barn 55 feet square on a stone foundation containing stabling for 16 horses and a large number of cattle. The loft is stored with 29 loads of sheaf oats for feed and tons of hay; there is also a cutting box. Another building of large dimensions is the granary, in which after teaming large quantities to market he still has stored 3,000 bushels of wheat. A crushing machine is in the building. There are a number of lesser buildings containing chicken house, pig pens and cattle sheds. The farm residence is a handsome frame structure of ample proportions, in connection with it is a wood shed. The water supply is unexcelled; besides house supply there is a well in the stables and a never failing spring situate in a bluff, which never freezes. Surrounded by a thick bluff of poplars, extending in a semi circle to the west, north and east, the winter storms are broken and accumulation of snow unknown. Added to his farming operations, Mr. Creamer conducts a threshing outfit for the season. His success is only one instance of what can be accomplished in Western Canada.—Baldur (Man.) Gazette, Nov. 16th, 1899.

Thousands are going to Western Canada this year to take advantage of the free homestead laws that are being offered by the government.

Some folks think that honesty, in moderation, is the best policy.—Puck.

## AMERICAN ENTERPRISE.

The pastor of the First Presbyterian church at Pine Bluff, Ark., was telling his congregation of his travels in the Holy Land, and closed his remarks with this incident, illustrating American enterprise: "When at 'Jacob's Well' he drew therefrom with his own hands a bucket of water; after doing so and looking at the tin bucket, he found it was a lard bucket with the name of 'Swift and Company' branded on same, which was the same as he had seen in Pine Bluff many times."—Kansas City Gazette.

### An Overworked Bird.

Dorothy—Our Audubon club had a lovely meeting this afternoon.

Papa—What did you do, dear?

"Oh, we passed an enthusiastic resolution appointing a committee to take immediaet steps—right off, you know—for the protection of the cuckoo."

"The cuckoo?"

"Yes, papa; in the cuckoo clock, you know."—Detroit Free Press.



### Good Engagement.

First Veteran Actor—Well, how goes it? Good engagement, I suppose—good pay?

Second Veteran Actor—Well, old friend, you know how these things are. Salary, properly speaking, I don't get, but I eat the whole of an enormous beefsteak in the second act.—N. Y. World.



Time, patience and industry conquer all things.—Chicago Daily News.